

**Virginia HIV Community Planning Committee
Meeting Summary**

Members Present: Odile Attiglah, Mark Baker, Bill Briggs, Heather Bronson, Tomas Cabrera, Betty Cochran, Dr. Rosalyn Cousar, Hugo Delgado, Carrie Dolan, Gregory Fordham, Caroline Fuller, Richard Hall, Robert Hewitt, Patrick Plourde, Martha Lees, Elaine Martin, Nicholas Mattsson, Michael McIntyre, Dr. Joseph Riddick, Paul Searcy, Edward Strickler, Bruce Taylor

Members Absent: Rhonda Callaham, Denise Clayborn, Vontrida Custis, Takecia Griffin, Deirdre Johnson, Ruth Royster, Whitney Scott

Other Attendees: Ben Alonso, Kathleen Carter, LaShaun Evans, Ami Gandhi and Rachel Rees of the Virginia Department of Health; Dr. Judy Bradford and Laurie Safford of Virginia Commonwealth University, Community Health Research Initiative; Rachel Faithful of Virginia Organizing Project; Leslie Stanley of Fredericksburg Area HIV/AIDS Support Services; Neal Sheppard, visitor

Total of 32 attendees.

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was convened at 8:30 a.m. by Elaine Martin and introductions were made.

Membership

Takecia Griffin is on maternity leave.

Old Business

None

New Business

- Travel Reimbursement changes – new travel forms were distributed and new fiscal requirements were noted and discussed.
- Discussion of Upcoming Co-Chair election – Elaine Martin explained that it is time to elect a new community co-chair. She explained the specificity for the position as: 1) ability to serve as a representative of his/her community and 2) willingness to work collaboratively with the health department-designated co-chair.

Instructions for Review of 2007 Grant Application (2006 Interim Progress Report)

Break out into small groups

Members broke into four groups to review sections of the 2007 Cooperative Agreement application (2006 Interim Progress Report) that had been mailed to members for review in August. The group discussions included a detailed comparison of the interim progress report with the 2003 Comprehensive Plan.

Large Group Discussion

The committee reconvened for a full Committee discussion of the small group findings. Budget concerns in the grant application included no funding for HIV prevention research which is a significant change from the past, and that the current application does not clearly verify the HCPC's budget priorities. Elaine explained that the problem could be because of the way the grant is designed. Historically, the grant specifications were different and the Tables of Allocation helped the committee do its work. But with implementation of PEMS, the tables were done away with. However, because PEMS data are still not available, no reporting mechanism is in place. To compensate for this, Ami Gandhi pulled data from the past two years and put it into the _____. Dr. Riddick asked for a breakdown of VDH staff salaries/expenses and how much is spent on CPG activities. Elaine will bring this information to the next meeting. She also indicated that if rescissions next year are not as bad, the rural RFP will go forward. Discussion then followed concerning how the cuts in research dollars will affect the HCPC research subcommittee's purpose and future. The consensus was to keep the Research Subcommittee.

Vote on Concurrence

Elaine opened the floor for a motion and vote to write a letter of concurrence, letter of concurrence with reservations, or letter of non-concurrence to CDC. Issues addressed were how the grant was reviewed, what the process entailed and how much time was allotted for review. A motion was made to write a letter of concurrence and the motion carried with no opposition and no abstentions. Although there were no reservations to Virginia's application, the HCPC was in unanimous agreement regarding concerns about the lack of correlation between the budget description in the grant and impact on at-risk populations. The current CDC requirements make it difficult to connect the comprehensive plan priorities to the actual services provided by VDH contractors. Previous formats included linkage tables that allowed the HCPC to more easily compare priority populations and interventions with proposed services. The indicators do not provide this information and the narrative questions asked by CDC do not specifically ask for the menu of interventions and populations to be targeted. In the past, this information was reported through measurable process objectives that also contained action steps and evaluation methodology. For the last three years, there has been a continual decrease in funding for prevention programs resulting in a decrease of funding for direct services for at-risk populations. While contractors have been putting data into the PEMS system since January 2006, there is no reporting mechanism. Finally, the committee expressed its concern about the restrictions on use of federal funding for syringe exchange programs because needle sharing continues to be a significant risk behavior for HIV transmission.

Selection of Committee members to write letter

Robert Hewitt, Martha Lees, Rosalyn Cousar volunteered to draft a letter of concurrence.

Lunch

Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition (VaHRC)

Rachel Faithful reported on her organization's efforts toward reducing harm through a set of practical strategies that reduce negative consequences of drug use, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use to managed use to abstinence. Harm reduction strategies meet drug users "where they're at," addressing conditions of use along with the use itself. Information is distributed concerning safe injection use and safe sex practices with the goal of empowering people to make healthier decisions. VaHRC has contacted Virginia Organizations Responding to AIDS (VORA) about collaborating for a long-term program of needle exchange. Elaine indicated that the Division of Disease Prevention wants to be ready with the latest studies to support harm reduction if General Assembly members contact VDH; however, it is unlikely that VDH will initiate a harm reduction initiative.

Subcommittees

Research – reported by Dr. Rosalyn Cousar, Chair
(I've e-mailed Rosalyn to send a short summary)

Standards and Practices – reported by Ami Gandhi

- 1) *Call to Action for African Americans* - The group discussed who the target audience should be, which points to include (e.g., HIV as not just a gay problem in the African American community), encouraging people in the black community to pledge their commitment rather than simply "signing on", and setting the release date for National Black HIV Awareness Day or Black History Month.
- 2) *Update Standards for Interventions* – Part of Rachel Rees' duties with the Division will be to work with the S&P concerning updating, revising, and implementing the standards. Concerning taxonomy, each standard should address a core set of factors, e.g., confidentiality, staff qualifications and training, etc. What Rachel will be looking at is making the interventions more measurable.

Break

Reading and approval of letter of concurrence/non-concurrence

Elaine Martin read the draft letter of concurrence to the committee. A motion was made to approve the letter as written and the motion carried.

Review and Discussion of Priority Population Results

(only got part of this – please provide a summary – I was answering Paul's, Hugo's, Michael's travel questions!)

The task before the committee was to leave the list as is or trim it down. Discussion followed. Delete the bottom four? In favor: 13 Opposed: 3
Proposal: from HIV infected down to Latinos with the bottom four removed?
Consensus: yes

Prevention Topics for Upcoming Public Hearings

Public comment is being solicited for VDH's use of Ryan White CARE Act Title II funds during the 2007-2008 grant year and issues, barriers and emerging risk behaviors related to HIV prevention. Ami asked what HIV prevention topics the HCPC wants presented. Ben Alonso brought flyers printed in English and Spanish for the members to distribute at their agencies/communities. Elaine will e-mail the listing of dates to members and asked that a CPG member attend each public hearing.

Review of July Meeting Summary

Motion was made to approve the July 14, 2006 meeting summary with one change. The motion carried.

Planning for November Meeting

(answering one of Tomas' many travel questions – missed the discussion)

Setting of 2007 Meeting Calendar

January 18

March 9

May 3

June 22

September 6

November 2

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Elaine Martin, Health Department Co-Chair

Date

Kathleen Carter, Recording Secretary

Date